

YOU MEASURE YOUR CHRISTIANITY

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march 2014

Treasure New and Old Matthew 13:52

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1. Give some Biblical examples of man bringing damage, even death, upon himself and others by working only with already familiar truths. Early in history, there was Cain. Throughout the Old Testament, cereal offerings were acceptable to the Lord, but not exclusively - a life was also to be offered in filling out the most important part of the pattern for mankind. The Israelites before the Assyrian conquest had gotten complacent about God's point of view; so did the Chosen People living just prior to the Babylonian incursion. So had the Pharisees and their followers during the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. Our Lord spoke of the Laodicean Church of Rev.3:15 as only lukewarm. He has given strong warning to the woman Church of Rev. 18.

2. Give some examples in today's world of men possibly being badly hurt by not keeping up with new information. It should be quite clear that keeping up is vital to medical doctors and dentists, lawyers, engineers, teachers, welders, investors - and you.

3. Give some contemporary examples of truth being twisted into lies, black being called white, labelling the bad as being good. The "wars of liberation" are really aggression by proxy. "Peaceful coexistence" is actually unrelenting ideological struggle and unremitting military buildup - while encouraging others not to do so. "Popular democracy" is one-party dictatorship liquidating all opposition. Would you come closer to home? "By accepting Christ, I am an overcomer and inheritor of His promises." (1Jhn. 5:4) "God will receive me just as I am." (Yes, He will initially; but will He let you bring what you still are today into His heaven?) And we can look at the many claims and counter-claims in the political pronouncements - world-wide.

4. What difference is there between your concept of overcoming and being perfect in something (mature)? Overcoming deals primarily with desire-nature. More overcoming leads to more dedication to the Plan for Life. Overcoming is not necessarily accompanied by full accomplishment in the new activity. Then, with this view, explain why the members of the Firstfruits and Harvest groups must be overcomers and, even so, they still carry a measure of "leaven" within. We must still come to better understand that it is dedication (sacrificial love) which counts first.

5. What is the correlation of the necessity of both discovering and learning new truth with dedication? Dedication must become constant, or it is not truly dedication. Dedication can not be proven or consistently exercised until an adequate amount of new truth has been exposed to the mind and heart. The process is on-going.

6. Is the amount of truth seen adequate for the Firstfruits also adequate for the Harvest group? If not, what does this tell you about how much truth is adequate for you? The teachings of both man and God will tell you that you should keep on acquiring more truth and practicing to incorporate it. (Phil.3 :13-14) More knowledge brings responsibility to practice what has been learned, but also to seek out even more truth in God's Plan for man's well-being. He is jealous for man's welfare and will not be satisfied until man comes into His likeness. He is our Father!

7. What abominations drove the Shekinah Glory of the Lord from the first corporate Church-nation and later from the Church of Christendom as well? The incompatibilities were the jealousy of the leaders for their own views of religion and their influence over "their" congregation. (Ezek. 8:3) Neither could the Lord put up with their

of forgetting new truths being shown or putting them on the shelf. 7. Favorable impressions of self derived from outward comparison to others.

In the overall, it is easy to see an overcomer of sorts in almost anyone's mirror and therefore anticipate some portions of the Lord's promises to overcomers. It is also easy to forget that what we see in our mirror may not be at all what the Lord sees. In each of the Seven Churches representing the conglomerate of the best of Christianity, the deficiencies listed have to do with immature emotions in the desire nature and a net lack in overcoming.

9. Every teacher who is truly sent by the Lord will be bringing out truths new to the class and congregation. (Matt. 13:52) Is that not dangerous, since false prophets and teachers abound today? They too present things which the masses may not have seen before - and seduce them into an acceptance as truth. What is the traditional Christian's typical way of determining what is true and what is not? Most of us are conditioned to accept what seems right in our view, rejecting what does not. That habit tends to keep people from advancing onto any step above where they already are. It tends to keep people on man-processed baby food, even though it has been tainted.

10. Then which teacher is to be trusted when something new is brought to your attention? The Word says, Trust only him whose teaching matches with the wholeness of the Word of God. (Isa. 8:20) But how will you know if it matches, if you do not now know what is in the wholeness of the Word of God? Do you go up to your preacher and ask him? Do you know whether he knows the implication of all the patterns and dramas, particularly those in the Old Testament which Paul and others said were vital to the understanding of the New? If you are really concerned,

secret thoughts and emotions of which they would not repent. (Ezek. 8:10-12) Our Keeper has always abhorred the construction of a tailored Savior, who might even carry the name Yahweh, Jesus or equivalent, but not His Spirit radiation. (Ezek. 8:14 - Tammuz means son of life.) God can have no part of pride in great learning imparted by man to man, or pride in the life-style which comes with it. (Ezek. 8:16) Our Lord cannot ignore unthinking faith in, or unwarranted presumption of salvation by association: "I am a part of a Bible-believing Church. Our congregation is moving in much more of the Lord's truth than the "Babylon" Churches. I am better in God's eyes in what I know than other Christians. Surely the Lord will have to bless me for what I have already seen and done. (Ezek. 8:17)

How will such Christians react when they find themselves deprived of their accustomed standard of living, perhaps also losing property and other possessions in The Great Tribulation? Won't they feel unblessed - and panic?

8. Re-express in your own words the qualities lacking in the Church of today, as noted in Christ's Seven Letters to the Seven Churches. You can read the Letters in Rev. 2 and 3. 1. Waning enthusiasm. The First Commandment is: Love Him! 2. Distress over the legalisms and pressures introduced by on-going teaching which requires more of the Christian. 3. Idolizing an easier way and leaders promoting it. 4. Tolerance of less strict teaching; forgiveness of a toning down of applicable truth. 5. Willingness to accept illness and weakness in faith as a norm. Expecting less than joy overflowing as the Lord's plan for the typical Christian of today. 6. Little power in opposing every harmful thing and in convincing others of the reality of God's tremendous power in our midst. This is the to-be-expected result

study (not just read) Deut. 8:3 and Acts 17:11-12. Then go into considerable thinking about what you have read so far.

11. If you agree with a vital need for new and full truth, why is it important at our stage of learning to shun the writings and mouthings of religious man and concentrate attention on the actual Word of God? It must be because religious man has less understanding of God's full plan than is now required by our Lord. Conversely and in stark contrast, religious man does have more misinformation about God's plan than ever before. (Lk.18:8, Rev. 12:9) You can be sure of this: no man can come away clean from an intimate contact with man's defiling of the Word of God, no matter through whom.

12. What then is your responsibility in being "gods" - as Jesus said? You can make sure, through personal involvement, that your brother and sister are moving experientially into new truth as fast as they are willing. Otherwise, they might die in the next few years, due to "faith-starvation" during the extreme crisis on all Christians. This is the greater measure of Christ's New Commandment, loving one another, as Jesus Loved His Disciples. (Jhn. 13:34)

Who can accurately measure his own Christianity and remain complacent as he recalls what our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ went through in life and in the most gruesome death? He did it just so you and I would then be enabled to speed up the approach to acceptable behavior consistent with the wonderful environment of the Kingdom of peace and health and wealth and unfeigned love. May you be motivated into great zeal!

C. Gordon Wolcott